ON THE GRAND

On the Grand *is a quarterly publication distributed by the Grand River Conservation Authority to member municipalities and other interested persons and groups. It contains capsule news items concerning Conservation Authority programs and projects throughout the valley. Comments and suggestions will be welcome.*

Administrative Office:
400 Clyde Road
Box 729, Cambridge, Ontario
N1R 5W6
Telephone: (519) 621-2761
FAX: (519) 621-4844

Volume 18 - Number 3 **Autumn 1990**

"UNDER THE BOARDWALK, WE'LL BE HAVING FUN"

Information Officer Charlene Wranich, Long Point Region Conservation Authority Information and Education Co-ordinator Janice Robertson, Water Quality Advisor Tracey Ryan and Community Relations Officer Rod Deacon share a lighter moment during a break in the crowds that made *"Under the Boardwalk"* one of the most popular exhibits at the International Plowing Match.

ADOPT A PHEASANT
Ron Bauman from the Fairlake Centre will be on hand at the Nature Centres this fall to handle Ring-necked Pheasant adoptions. He's shown here with a visitor to the "Under the Boardwalk" exhibit at the International Plowing Match.

Under the Boardwalk

One of the highlights of this year's International Plowing Match was the impressive "Under the Boardwalk" exhibit hosted by the Grand River and Long Point Region Conservation Authorities. More than 46,000 visitors came through the exhibit during the course of the week, with 12,000 visitors on Saturday. Visitors often waited in line to pick up a free Eastern White Cedar on the way out of the tent. "Under the Boardwalk" was undoubtedly one of the best exhibits at the Match, and possibly the finest exhibit the Conservation Authority has ever produced.

Additional funding for "Under the Boardwalk" was provided by Carolinian Canada, the Grand Valley Conservation Foundation, the Long Point Region Foundation for Conservation, Norfolk Co-operative Ltd., and Posi-Chrome Lab Inc.

Adopt a Pheasant

During October and November, you can adopt and help to band and release a Ring-necked Pheasant at one of the Conservation Authority Nature Centres. For your $10.00 donation, you will even receive an "official" adoption certificate.

If you are interested, you should call the Nature Centre near you, because the number of orphans is limited. And if you can't make it out to one of the Centres, you can telephone to arrange the adoption. Adoption takes place at 2:00 pm on the following Sundays at each Centre:

October 21 - Guelph Lake Interpretive Centre
October 28 - Laurel Creek Nature Centre
November 4 - Apps' Mill Nature Centre
November 18 - Taquanyah Nature Centre

Interpreter Ron Bauman, who is handling the adoptions, is also providing interpretive programs to groups in the watershed. You can contact him at the Fairlake Centre at (519) 622-2880. As interest continues to increase in his programs, concerted efforts will be made to increase funding and use at the Fairlake Centre.

Visitor Services Program

A wide variety of activities from children's games to Fishing Derbies took place under the Visitor Services Program in the Conservation Areas this year. These programs proved to be very popular, and may have extended the length of time that visitors remained in the areas. In a joint letter to the Conservation Authority, a group of mothers in Waterloo summed up the response of many people who took part in these programs:

"The summer program at the Laurel Creek Conservation Area has been a wonderful experience for our children . . . Many thanks to all who were involved in providing this program . . . We look forward to returning next year."

Conservation Area income and expenses are expected to meet budget projections for this year. Income is up about $40,000 and expenses $33,000. Day use was drastically reduced in 1990 as there were only two weekends in the entire summer to the end of August that were without rain or poor weather.

Forestry Summary

At this point, survival rates for 1990 spring plantings are in the 85% range. Due to the high demand for our Forestry programs in 1991, staff will be making approximately 300 site visits this year in preparation for next year's planting.

In keeping with the trend of the last few years, more trees continue to be planted on private lands than on Authority lands. These private landowners face an increased cost for seedlings next year due to an increase in seedling cost from the Ministry of Natural Resources.

THE LITTLE RASCAL

Two year old James Yule of Kitchener holds the trophy he won as the Youngest Fisherman at the Pinehurst Lake Fishing Derby. The Derby, held on August 11-12, was one of the many popular events organized by Visitor Services Program staff at Pinehurst this summer.

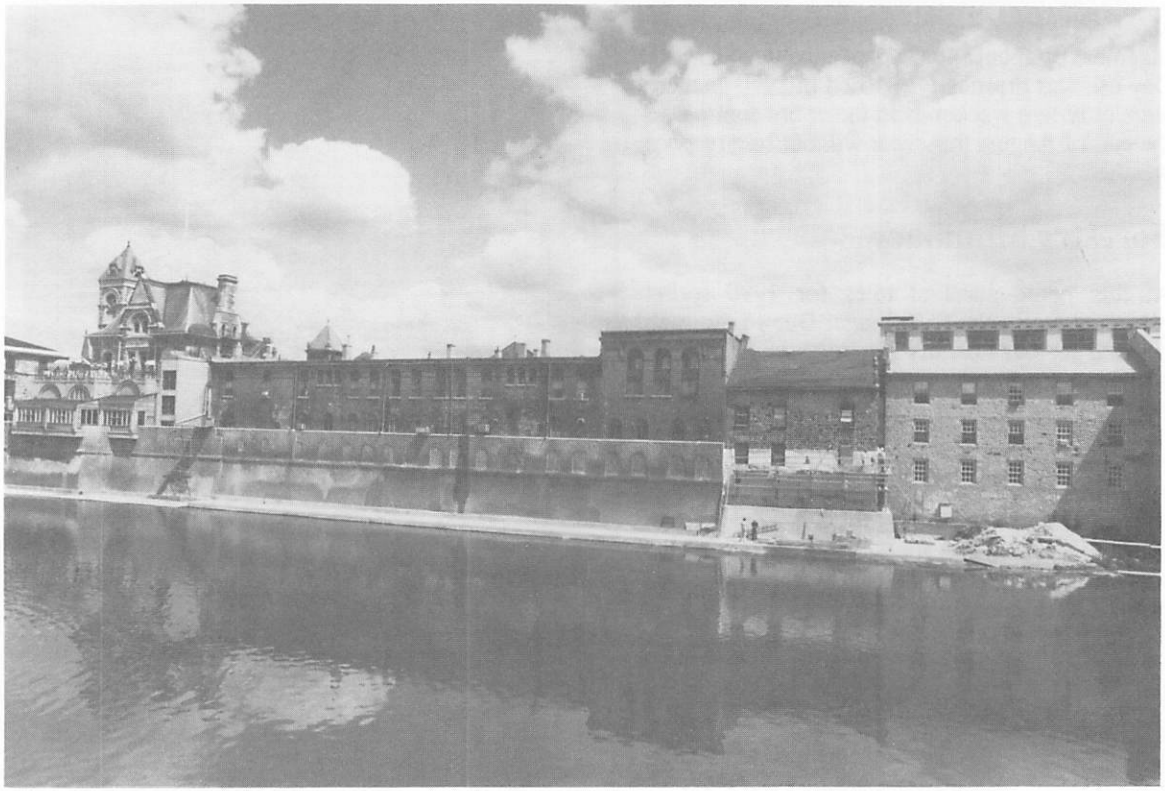
Cambridge Flood Protection Work

Cambridge Flood Protection Work in 1990, including some carry over work from 1989, consisted of: the completion of the flood protection wall from Blair Rd. to Main St., the floodproofing of the old Imperial Hotel and old Fire Hall building on Water St. South, as well as dike and wall construction on the west side of the river on Concession St. South to and including Waterworks Park.

Flood protection work planned for 1991 consists of the section downstream of Concession St. on the east and west sides of the river. By the end of 1990, $18 million will have been invested in this long term project. Outstanding work includes the installation of stop log structures at the Parkhill St. and Concession St. bridges.

Brantford Flood Protection Work

Flood protection work in Brantford continued with Kast Construction concluding its 1989 contract. This year's contract of $1.5 million for work above the Lorne Bridge was awarded to Blue-Con Inc. of London. The estimated cost of Brantford flood protection work for 1991 is $1.6 million. By the end of 1990, $14.5 million will have been spent on this project. At the conclusion of 1991 all work on the Brantford project should be completed.



CAMBRIDGE FLOOD PROTECTION

Different stages of construction are visible along the east side of the Grand River in Cambridge south of the old Post Office.

EVERTON DAM

Road and bridge construction continues at the site of the Everton Dam rebuilt by the Conservation Authority this summer.

Capital Works

Tenders were awarded in 1990 for the construction of a small hydro installation at the Conestogo Dam. The estimated cost of this project, which began this fall, will be close to $1 million. Upon completion, some of the hydro will be used in the Conservation Area, and the rest will be sold to Ontario Hydro. This arrangement will be similar to the one at the Guelph Lake and Shand Dam hydro installations.

In other Capital Works, the new inspection and maintenance platform at the Shand Dam has been completed at a cost of $185,000. Stop logs have been replaced and a new low flow sluice gate was installed at the Luther Dam at a cost of $45,000. In conjunction with the County of Wellington, the Conservation Authority also replaced the Everton Dam this summer at a cost of $200,000.

In the village of Wellesley, rip rap has been installed at a cost of $11,000 along the Firella Creek. This will serve to reduce potential erosion and provide bank stabilization.

Nature Centres Expand Programs

The Haldimand Public School Board has signed its first contract at the Taquanyah Nature Centre. Six school boards are now under contract for outdoor education programs with our Nature Centres. In summer arrangements with school boards, interpretive staff also held summer school programs at the Guelph Lake Interpretive Centre and the Laurel Creek Nature Centre for the Wellington and Waterloo Separate School Boards. This summer four successful day camps were held at three of our Nature Centres. These camps drew more participants at less expense than our previous Resource Management Camps. In addition the Interpretive Centre at Guelph Lake hosted a summer program for 500 children at the Evergreen Girl Guide Spring Gathering. This program was typical of the expanded summer programs for organized groups.

Master Watershed Plans

In order to develop Master Watershed Plans well in advance of urban growth, a Committee was established last year consisting of representatives from the development industry, municipalities and provincial agencies. This Committee meets every other month to develop a strategy to facilitate the completion of Master Watershed Plans for small watersheds such as Strasburg Creek. A recent accomplishment of this Committee was the preparation of "Generic Terms of Reference for Master Watershed Plans." Establishment of this terminology ensures that the same language will be used from plan to plan.

These plans set targets or objectives for small watersheds so that development there can take place in a sustainable way, and in as integrated a fashion as possible with the particular ecosystem in each watershed. The additional advantage of development proceeding along the guidelines of these plans is to keep the affected stream in as natural a condition as possible, in order to reduce the need for future maintenance.

The cost of ongoing maintenance is one of the most compelling arguments for developing watershed plans. If development does not follow the guidelines of these plans, then artificial erosion protection measures usually become necessary. These measures often take the form of gabion baskets, the current cost of which now averages $2000.00 a running metre.

On October 31 at the Valhalla Inn, the Committee is hosting a seminar entitled "Integrated Watershed Management in Developing Areas: Considerations for Waterloo Region." The seminar provides an opportunity for participants to become acquainted with the new strategies concepts in integrated watershed planning that are being developed under Master Watershed Plans.

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE INVASION

Creeping Kudzu, Zebra mussels, and now, Purple Loosestrife. This showy plant with bright purple flowers that bloom from early July to September is invading the wetlands and rivers of Canada and the northeastern United States.

Its beautiful flowers are becoming more familiar along the shores of rivers and streams in the Grand River watershed.

Unfortunately, this attractive plant has all the hallmarks of a destructive invader. Purple Loosestrife has the amazing capacity to reproduce either by seeding, sprouting or cuttings. A single mature plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds a year. When this variety of loosestrife invades an area, it rapidly outgrows native vegetation and can eventually displace up to 90% of the native species in an affected area. Its impact on wetland diversity and wildlife are devastating. Physical removal of the plant is ineffective. To date, expensive and time consuming herbicide spraying has not been tried in Canada. Biological controls are now being studied in Europe, but the release of any natural insect predator runs the risk that any newly imported predator may begin devouring something more desirable.

Biologist/Environmental Services, Larry Roszell, examines a stalk of Purple Loosestrife, once the plant has gone to seed. To the left of Larry's hands can be seen last year's Loosestrife stalks which have not yet broken down. At this location in the south end of Cambridge across from Churchill Park, the area vegetated by Loosestrife had more than tripled in one year.

The spread of Purple Loosestrife in our watershed is being monitored by Authority staff. Experts believe that the best strategy for controlling its spread is to keep it out of all areas now free of it. This control effort includes the prevention of disturbances to and development of the remaining wetland features in the Grand River watershed. Hopefully, more effective control measures will be developed in the near future.

SHADOW THE RAT

Christina Thompson of Fergus cradles Shadow the Rat while attending a Day Camp Program at the Guelph Lake Interpretive Centre this summer.